



# DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES

→ THE ECONOMIC VALUE OF  
VOLUNTEERING IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Government of Western Australia  
Department for Communities

# VOLUNTEER

A Report Commissioned by  
The Department for Communities  
Government of Western Australia

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## FOREWORD FROM → THE MINISTER

***As Minister for Seniors & Volunteering, I play a leading role in helping build strong, sustainable communities where all segments of society are valued and share an equal sense of belonging.***

Volunteers play a vital role in helping me achieve this vision, where communities come together to lend support to the State in both the good times and in the bad.

Volunteering has an economic value that is sometimes forgotten or that we as a community may not fully recognise.

In 2006 alone, the volunteering contribution made to the State was estimated at \$6.6 billion.

From formal daily volunteering that occurs within organisations to more informal volunteering that happens between family and friends, solid research to better understand its economic value in the State needed to be conducted.

I am delighted that acknowledged expert Dr Duncan Ironmonger from the University of Melbourne was commissioned to conduct research to better understand the economic value of volunteering in our State.

Dr Ironmonger has prepared similar reports in Victoria, South Australia and Queensland and I look forward to seeing how his insights will be used over the coming months.

I commend this report and look forward to seeing how this research will help better inform and strengthen the thinking related to new policy development and programs delivered to assist volunteers in Western Australia.



**Robyn McSweeney MLC**  
**MINISTER FOR CHILD PROTECTION; COMMUNITY SERVICES; SENIORS AND VOLUNTEERING; WOMEN'S INTERESTS**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Key results

Volunteers provided a volume of work equivalent to 99,000 jobs in 1992 rising to 146,000 in 2006. This is equivalent to an additional 13.4 per cent of the paid number of people employed in Western Australia in 1992 and 13.6 per cent in 2006.

This is 40 per cent more than the total employed in the health care and social assistance industry in Western Australia of 67,000 in 1992 and 104,000 in 2006. The health and social assistance industry comprised under 10 per cent of the total WA paid employment.

Volunteering was worth about \$2.7 billion to the Western Australian economy in 1992, growing to \$6.6 billion in 2006. This was calculated by adding together the value of organised and unorganised volunteering, travel time and other volunteer inputs.

The surveys indicate a 13 per cent rise in the average total hours per adult of volunteering in Western Australia over the 15 years 1992 to 2006. In dollar terms in the 15 years 1992 to 2006, Western Australian adults, on average, increased their donation of volunteering time and associated costs by 90 per cent from \$2,244 to \$4,254 per annum.

In macro-economic terms the total volume of volunteering time in Western Australia increased by 47 per cent in the 15 years 1992 to 2006.

## The value of different types of volunteering

In their work on measuring and valuing volunteering, Dr Ironmonger and the Households Research Unit have distinguished between 'organised' and 'unorganised' volunteering.

### *Organised volunteering (Formal volunteering)*

Organised volunteering is defined as unpaid help in the form of time, service or skills willingly given by an individual through an organisation or group. Formal or organised volunteering is indirect as it is mediated through an organisation.

Reimbursement of expenses or small gifts is not regarded as payment of salary. Work reimbursed by payment in-kind is not regarded as volunteering.

In 2006, excluding the cost of volunteer travel, organised voluntary work in Western Australia was worth \$2.1 billion. However, the time use surveys show that organised volunteering is less than one third of total volunteering time. The average hours per adult of volunteering through organisations shows a rise of 32 per cent over the 15 years.

Women in Western Australia contributed an estimated \$1.07 billion dollars of time and other inputs to volunteer organisations in 2006. In comparison, Western Australian men's donation was slightly less, about \$1.03 billion. There is a higher volunteering rate of women – 40 per cent compared to 36 per cent for men – but on average men volunteers give more organised volunteering time per year than women, 139 hours compared with 124 hours.

Regional Western Australians contributed approximately \$475 million to their communities in terms of organised volunteering. Volunteers living in Perth contributed an estimated \$1.621 billion through organisations.

### **Unorganised volunteering (Informal volunteering)**

Unorganised volunteering is defined as the informal unpaid help and care that occurs within the personal networks of family, friends, neighbours and acquaintances. Informal or unorganised volunteering is direct as it is not mediated through an organisation. It includes regular, spontaneous and sporadic help that takes place between friends and neighbours such as giving advice, looking after other people's children or helping an elderly neighbour.

Excluding the cost of volunteer travel, unorganised volunteering was estimated at \$1.5 billion in 1992 and \$3.56 billion in 2006.

This represents 54 per cent of the total value of volunteering in Western Australia in the later year. The remaining 18 to 15 per cent contribution by volunteers was through their travel – \$0.5 billion in 1992 and \$1.0 billion in 2006.

The average hours per adult of unorganised volunteering shows a rise of 12 per cent from 1992 to 2006. There appears to have been a large rise in the average amount of unorganised/informal volunteering in support of children and only a small rise in informal support for adults.

It should be noted that in spite of these increases in both types of volunteering from 1992 to 2006, there was a decline between 1997 and 2006 in adult support.

### **How were the figures calculated?**

The starting points for the estimates are the surveys conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics on time use in 1992, 1997 and 2006 and on voluntary work in 1995, 2000 and 2006. Data on volunteering from the ABS 2006 Census of Population and Housing also have been incorporated in this report.

The ABS time use surveys collect detailed diaries covering all uses of time over two consecutive days. These surveys give daily participation rates and times spent in all types of activities. Hence the participation and times spent on both types of volunteering, organised and unorganised, are obtained in the time use surveys.

On the other hand, the ABS voluntary work surveys cover only volunteering through organisations. These are not obtained through detailed diaries but from asking respondents to recall their participation in this type of volunteering over the last twelve months. They also ask the amount of time spent on organised volunteering over this period.

Despite the different methodologies of the surveys, together they provide the basis for making estimates of the average time spent in volunteer activities by the adult population of Western Australia.

The estimates of the value of volunteer time prepared for this report are based on the *gross opportunity cost* wage rates for volunteer and community work published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in their report on *Unpaid Work and the Australian Economy* (ABS 2000). These were **\$14.34 per hour in 1992 and \$17.47 per hour in 1997.**

In the absence of any further ABS published estimates of volunteer wage rates, the changes in the published ABS national accounts estimates for "average compensation per employee" between 1992 and 2006 were used to make estimates for volunteer wage rates for the intervening year 1995 and the subsequent years 2000 and 2006.

The series of wage rates per hour are:

<b>1992</b>	<b>\$14.34</b>
1995	\$16.00
<b>1997</b>	<b>\$17.47</b>
2000	\$19.26
<b>2006</b>	<b>\$24.09</b>

These rates are used to make estimates of the annual value per adult of volunteering time in Western Australia.

# VOLUNTEERING

## What is volunteering?

Many volunteers may be unaware that their activities are considered to be volunteering. For instance, a family member who provides care to an elderly person or someone who is a member of a sports club committee may not consider themselves “volunteers”. Volunteering itself can mean different things to different people and from different cultural perspectives.

In reality there is a wide range of interpretations of what constitutes voluntary work. In 2001 the United Nations (UN) adopted specific criteria to distinguish volunteering from other forms of behaviour that may superficially resemble it. According to the UN, volunteering:

- is not to be undertaken primarily for financial gain;
- is undertaken of one's own free will; and
- brings benefit to a third party as well as to the people who volunteer.

In its work on measuring and valuing volunteering, the Households Research Unit has distinguished between “organised” and “unorganised” volunteering.

Organised volunteering is defined as unpaid help in the form of time, service or skills willingly given by an individual through an organisation or group. Formal or organised volunteering is *indirect* as it is mediated through an organisation. Reimbursement of expenses or small gifts is not regarded as payment of salary. Work reimbursed by payment in-kind is not regarded as volunteering.

Unorganised volunteering is defined as the informal unpaid help and care that occurs within the personal networks of family, friends, neighbours and acquaintances. Informal or unorganised volunteering is *direct* as it is not mediated through an organisation. It includes regular, spontaneous and sporadic help that takes place between friends and neighbours such as giving advice, looking after other people's children or helping an elderly neighbour.

A more detailed discussion of the definitions of organised (formal) and unorganised (informal) volunteering can be found in Chapter 3 of the report *Giving Time: The economic and social value of volunteering in Victoria* (Soupourmas and Ironmonger, 2002) and is included as an Appendix to this report.

## Why put a dollar value on volunteering?

Valuing volunteer time is of enduring interest in volunteering research (Foster, 1997; Gaskin, 1999). Converting the currency of volunteering time into monetary terms can be a useful device for measuring the contribution that volunteers make to society (Knapp, 1990). It is crucial that we as a community acknowledge that volunteer time is a real donation that is as valuable as money. This is especially important when time is the only resource many individuals have to offer. By exploring ways of putting a value on volunteer work we help to make this sort of work more visible.

The calculation of the economic value of volunteering in Western Australia is important because it can:

- emphasise to government and policy makers that voluntary work makes a significant contribution to the Western Australian community;
- encourage Western Australian people to become volunteers by demonstrating the economic benefits of volunteering; and
- inform the media and the community about the value of volunteer time to the Western Australian economy.

Although anecdotal evidence suggests that the economic contribution of volunteering is great, there are limited reliable figures on the exact monetary value. While we have various official statistics about participation rates, there are no readily available official statistics to show the important contribution volunteering makes to the Western Australian economy.

The purpose of this report is to address all of these issues.





## Various methods of calculating the dollar value of volunteering

Each quarter the national accounts published by the ABS make visible only part of the valuable economic activities of Australia – the productive activities that we pay for through the market economy. Unpaid non-market activities that are about as valuable are omitted from the quarterly national accounts, thus unpaid household and volunteer work are invisible and consequently tend to be ignored from our national objectives and from indicators of our national performance.

To rectify this narrow focus, it is necessary to put a value on the unpaid production through household and volunteer work. Satellite national accounts of household productive activities are being developed to complete the picture of economic activity, to allow us to see the full range of economically productive activity (Ironmonger, 2000; Ironmonger & Soupourmas, 2002).

There are two benefits that flow from most human activities – **output benefits** and **process benefits**. The distinction between these two kinds of benefits is best illustrated by an example. Consider the activity of meal preparation. The positive *output benefits* are the meals themselves, the “transferable” outputs of the meal preparation which accrue to the persons eating the meals.

The *process benefits* of meal preparation, which may be positive or negative, are the pleasure or displeasure the chef obtains from the time spent in meal preparation and cooking. These *process benefits* are non-transferable to another person. With voluntary work the transferable *output benefits* are the services provided to others by the volunteers. The non-transferable *process benefits* are the pleasures obtained by the volunteers from the time spent in volunteering.

Unfortunately, the statistical methods so far devised for valuation have not come up with an objective method of valuing process benefits. The best that can be done is a subjective method of asking individuals to evaluate the pleasure/displeasure obtained from an activity on a scale of, say, one to five, as : (1) Very unpleasant, (2) Unpleasant, (3) Neither pleasant or unpleasant, (4) Pleasant, and (5) Very pleasant.

This scaling process does not lead to a monetary valuation of an activity but does allow comparisons between different activities, so that minding the grandchildren would be mainly pleasant or very pleasant and cleaning the toilet would be unpleasant or very unpleasant.

**Several methods have been designed to put a monetary value on the output benefit from the time spent in voluntary work.**

1. A method developed in the United Kingdom, called the Volunteer Investment and Value Audit (VIVA), puts a value on the resources used to support volunteers (management staff costs, training, recruitment, insurance and administration) in relation to the value of volunteer time. This approach quantifies the economic investment that organisations make in their volunteers. As many organisers of volunteers would contend, contrary to popular opinion, volunteers are not free of cost. The VIVA ratio, which states that for every dollar invested in volunteers there is a return of X dollars in the value of the volunteers' work, is calculated by dividing the value of volunteer time by organisational investments. This method is very useful in producing audit data for individual organisations. Gaskin (1999) has found that money spent on volunteers is more than doubled in value and may increase up to eightfold.
2. Undoubtedly, the most satisfactory valuation method involves counting the specific outputs and pricing these outputs at market prices of comparable goods or services produced and sold in the market. For example, the meals provided at home can be counted and valued at market prices for comparable restaurant or take-away meals. The "value added" by the unpaid household labour is then obtained by deducting the costs of the purchased intermediate inputs of food, energy and other materials and the cost of the household capital used in the meal preparation. This method gives a more accurate reflection of the labour productivity of the technology of the household.
3. An alternative method, which is less satisfactory from the point of view of reflecting the productivity or efficiency of household technology, involves valuing the time spent in an unpaid activity at a "comparable" market wage. The wage chosen is either:
  - (a) the "opportunity cost" of the time the persons involved in unpaid work could have obtained if they had spent the time in paid work;

(b) the "specialist wage" that would be needed to pay a specialist from the market to do the activity (say, a cook to do cooking or a baby-sitter to do baby sitting); or

(c) the "generalist wage" that a general housekeeper would be paid to do the unpaid work.

The "net" opportunity cost values unpaid work at the after tax wage rate less work-related expenses plus income by way of employer cost of superannuation and fringe benefits.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics used these comparable market wage methods to produce estimates of the value of unpaid household work and the value of volunteer and community work for 1992 and 1997. In the ABS estimates, volunteer and community work excluded time spent in civic responsibilities, other community participation and in church and religious activities but included the time spent in travel for volunteer and community work.

Using this definition, the ABS published estimates of the value of volunteer and community work in Australia in 1992 and 1997 in its report *Unpaid Work and the Australian Economy* (ABS 2000).

Table 1 shows the ABS estimates for three comparable market wage rates – specialist wage, gross opportunity cost and net opportunity cost – for 1992 and 1997.

The estimates prepared for this report of the value of volunteer time are based on the ABS estimates of the gross *opportunity* cost wage rates.

Although the gross opportunity cost wage is the highest of the three wage rates used by the ABS, the gross wage has been used in this report (and in the reports by the Households Research Unit on volunteering in Victoria, South Australia and Queensland) because, if the services provided by volunteers were provided instead by paid employees, the costs incurred by organisations and households would need to cover gross wages including income taxes and other charges such as contributions to superannuation schemes.

In the absence of any further ABS-published estimates of volunteer wage rates, the changes in the published ABS national accounts estimates for "average compensation per employee" between 1992 and 2006 were used to make estimates for volunteer wage rates for the intervening year 1995 and the subsequent years 2000 and 2006.

The series of wage rates per hour are:

<b>1992</b>	<b>\$14.34</b>
1995	\$16.00
<b>1997</b>	<b>\$17.47</b>
2000	\$19.26
<b>2006</b>	<b>\$24.09</b>

These rates are used to make estimates of the annual value per adult of volunteering time in Western Australia.



**Table 1: Value of volunteer and community work, Australia**

	1992		1997	
	<i>Wage rate \$/hr</i>	<b>\$ billion / year</b>	<i>Wage rate \$/hr</i>	<b>\$ billion / year</b>
Specialist wage	12.17	<b>18</b>	13.96	<b>25</b>
Opportunity cost – gross	14.34	<b>21</b>	17.47	<b>31</b>
Opportunity cost – net	10.87	<b>16</b>	13.47	<b>24</b>

# VOLUNTEERING IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

## Total hours of volunteering in Western Australia

The starting point for the estimates prepared for this report were the surveys conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics on time use in 1992, 1997 and 2006 and on voluntary work in 1995, 2000 and 2006. Data on volunteering from the 2006 Census of Population and Housing also have been incorporated in this report.

The ABS time use surveys collect detailed diaries covering all uses of time over two consecutive days. These surveys give daily participation rates and times spent in all types of activities. Hence the participation and times spent on both types of volunteering, organised and unorganised are obtained in the time use surveys.

On the other hand, the ABS voluntary work surveys cover only volunteering through organisations. These are not obtained through detailed diaries but by asking respondents to recall their participation in this type of volunteering over the last twelve months. They also ask the amount of time spent on organised volunteering over the last year.

Despite the different methodologies of the surveys, together they provide the basis for making estimates of the average time spent in volunteer activities by the adult population of Western Australia.

The surveys indicate a 13 per cent rise in the average total hours of volunteering per adult in Western Australia over the 15 years 1992 to 2006. It is noteworthy that after rising by 25 hours from an average of 139 hours per year in 1992 to 164 hours in 1997, the total average hours of volunteer work in Western Australia fell by 7 hours to 157 in 2006.

Volunteering through organisations shows a rise of 32 per cent per adult over the 15 year period and unorganised (informal) volunteering a slightly lower rise of 12 per cent. Within the unorganised there appears to have been a large rise in the average amount of informal volunteering in support of children and only a small rise in informal support for adults. Total travel time in support of volunteering, both organised and unorganised, appears to have declined over the 15 years.

**Table 2: Hours of volunteer work, Western Australia – annual hours per adult  
(Averaged over all adult population aged 18+)**

Volunteering	1992	1995	1997	2000	2006	Per cent change 1992 - 2006	Annual per cent change 1992 - 2006
<b>Organised</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>2.0%</b>
<b>Unorganised</b>	<b>75</b>		<b>87</b>		<b>84</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>0.8%</b>
Adult Support	53		65		55	4%	0.3%
Child Support	22		22		29	30%	1.9%
<b>Travel</b>	<b>26</b>		<b>30</b>		<b>23</b>	<b>-12%</b>	<b>-0.9%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>139</b>		<b>164</b>		<b>157</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>

Source: Estimates of the Households Research Unit based on Australian Bureau of Statistics time use surveys 1992, 1997 and 2006 and voluntary work surveys 1995, 2000 and 2006.



In macro-economic terms the total volume of volunteering time in Western Australia increased by 47 per cent in the 15 years from 1992 to 2006. These estimates are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Volume of volunteer work, Western Australia**  
*Million hours per year*

Volunteering	1992	1995	1997	2000	2006	Per cent change 1992 - 2006	Annual per cent change 1992 - 2006
<b>Organised</b>	<b>45.0</b>	<b>55.0</b>	<b>62.5</b>	<b>74.0</b>	<b>77.2</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>3.9%</b>
<b>Unorganised</b>	<b>90.2</b>		<b>115.8</b>		<b>131.1</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>2.7%</b>
Adult Support	63.1		86.8		85.5	35%	2.2%
Child Support	27.0		28.9		45.6	69%	3.8%
<b>Travel</b>	<b>31.6</b>		<b>40.2</b>		<b>36.4</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>166.8</b>		<b>218.5</b>		<b>244.7</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>2.8%</b>

Source: Estimates of the Households Research Unit based on Australian Bureau of Statistics time use surveys 1992, 1997 and 2006 and voluntary work surveys 1995, 2000 and 2006.

**Table 4: Volume of volunteer work, Western Australia**

<b>Equivalent jobs (000)</b>							
Volunteering	1992	1995	1997	2000	2006	Per cent change 1992 - 2006	Annual per cent change 1992 - 2006
<b>Organised</b>	<b>26.8</b>	<b>32.7</b>	<b>37.2</b>	<b>44.0</b>	<b>46.0</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>3.9%</b>
<b>Unorganised</b>	<b>53.7</b>		<b>68.9</b>		<b>78.0</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>2.7%</b>
<b>Travel</b>	<b>18.8</b>		<b>23.9</b>		<b>21.7</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>99.3</b>		<b>130.1</b>		<b>145.6</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>2.8%</b>
Additional per cent of total employed persons 15+	13.4%		15.2%		13.6%		

Source: Estimates of the Households Research Unit based on Australian Bureau of Statistics time use surveys 1992, 1997 and 2006 and voluntary work surveys 1995, 2000 and 2006.

Table 4 presents estimates of the number of equivalent jobs that volunteers do in Western Australia using 1,680 hours per year (equivalent to an average job requiring 35 hours per week for 48 weeks).

Volunteers provided a volume of work equivalent to 99,300 jobs in 1992 rising to 145,600 in 2006. This is equivalent to an additional 13.4 per cent of the paid number of people employed in Western Australia in 1992 and 13.6 per cent in 2006. It is noteworthy that this additional per cent employed volume peaked in 1997 (15.2%) and then returned, in 2006, to a level similar to 1992.

### Total value of volunteering in Western Australia

The estimates prepared for this report are based on gross opportunity cost wage rates of \$14.34 per hour in 1992 and \$17.47 per hour used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in its 1997 report on unpaid work.

Although the gross opportunity cost wage is the highest of the three wage rates used by the ABS, the gross wage has been used in this report (and in the reports by the Households Research Unit on volunteering in Victoria, South Australia and Queensland) because, if the services provided by volunteers were provided instead by paid employees, the costs incurred by organisations and households would need to cover gross wages including income taxes and other charges such as contributions to superannuation schemes.

Based on the increases in the ABS national accounts estimate for “average compensation per employee” the wage rates for 1995, 2000 and 2006 are estimated at \$16.00, \$19.26 and \$24.09 per hour respectively.

These rates are used to make estimates of the annual value per adult of volunteering time in Western Australia. The wage rate estimates are Australia-wide averages to maintain comparability with the previous estimates by the Households Research Unit of the value of volunteering in Victoria, South Australia and Queensland.

Table 5 shows the total value of organised and unorganised *volunteering time, including travel time*, increased by 146 per cent from \$2.4 billion in 1992 to \$5.9 billion in 2006.



Including the costs of other associated inputs, *volunteering* was worth about \$2.7 billion to the Western Australian economy in 1992 and \$6.6 billion in 2006 – a growth of 146 per cent in the 15 years.

As the Western Australian adult population grew by 30 percent in this period, in dollar terms Western Australian adults, on average, increased their donation of volunteering time and associated costs by almost 90 percent from \$2,244 to \$4,254 per annum. See Chart 3.

**Table 5: Total value of volunteering, Western Australia**

\$ million							
Volunteering	1992	1995	1997	2000	2006	Per cent change 1992 - 2006	Annual per cent change 1992 - 2006
<b>A. Volunteer Time Inputs</b>							
Organised	645	880	1,092	1,425	1,860	188%	7.9%
Unorganised	1,293		2,023		3,158	144%	6.6%
Adult Support	905		1,517		2,059	127%	6.0%
Child Support	388		506		1,098	183%	7.7%
Travel	454		702		876	93%	4.8%
<b>TOTAL VALUE OF TIME</b>	<b>2,392</b>		<b>3,817</b>		<b>5,894</b>	<b>146%</b>	<b>6.7%</b>
<b>B. Other Volunteer Inputs (vehicle, telephone etc)</b>							
Organised	82	112	139	181	236	188%	7.9%
Unorganised	164		257		401	144%	6.6%
Travel	58		89		111	93%	4.8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>304</b>		<b>485</b>		<b>748</b>	<b>146%</b>	<b>6.7%</b>
<b>C. Total Volunteer Inputs</b>							
Organised	727	992	1,231	1,606	2,096	188%	7.9%
Unorganised	1,457		2,280		3,559	144%	6.6%
Travel	511		792		988	93%	4.8%
<b>TOTAL VALUE OF VOLUNTEERING</b>	<b>2,696</b>		<b>4,302</b>		<b>6,642</b>	<b>146%</b>	<b>6.7%</b>

Source: Estimates of the Households Research Unit based on Australian Bureau of Statistics time use surveys 1992, 1997 and 2006 and voluntary work surveys 1995, 2000 and 2006.

## Other Volunteer Inputs

Volunteers often also contribute the use of their capital equipment, particularly the use of their own vehicles, to volunteering activities. Recent estimates of these inputs prepared for all sectors of the household economy show these inputs involve a 12.7 per cent additional cost to the value of labour time in volunteering. This comprises of 4.05 per cent for capital equipment, mainly vehicles, and 8.65 per cent for other inputs, mainly vehicle running costs (Ironmonger and Soupourmas, 1999).

Including the use of capital equipment and the donation of the running costs, fuel and other materials, the gross value of volunteering activity in Western Australia is estimated to be \$2.7 billion in 1992 and \$6.6 billion in 2006. Table 5 shows full details of these values for all years 1992, 1997 and 2006 and the value of organised volunteering for the intervening years 1995 and 2000.

In 2006, organised voluntary work in Western Australia was worth \$2.1 billion. However, the time use surveys show that organised volunteering is less than one third of all volunteering.

Excluding the cost of volunteer travel, unorganised volunteering was estimated at \$1.5 billion in 1992 and \$3.56 billion in 2006. This represents 54 per cent of the total value of volunteering in Western Australia in the later year. The remaining 18 to 15 per cent contribution by volunteers was through their travel, \$0.5 billion in 1992 and \$1.0 billion in 2006.

These figures can be compared with supplementary data in Tables 6 and 7.

**Table 6: Supplementary data, Western Australia**

Supplementary Data	1992	1995	1997	2000	2006	Per cent change 1992 - 2006	Annual per cent change 1992 - 2006
Wage Rate (\$/hr)	14.34	16.00	17.47	19.26	24.09	68%	3.8%
Adult Population 18+ ('000)	1,201	1,269	1,322	1,391	1,561	30%	1.9%
Employed Persons 15+ ('000) (June)	739	836	858	915	1,073	45%	2.7%
Gross State Product (\$ million)	41,507	50,776	57,271	68,556	118,183	185%	7.8%
Compensation of Employees (\$ million)	18,203	21,677	24,548	29,235	45,566	150%	6.8%

Source: Estimates of the Households Research Unit based on Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates for population, national accounts and employment.



The 1992 estimate of the value of volunteering of \$2.7 billion can be compared with Western Australia's Gross State Product (GSP) in 1992 of \$41.5 billion, as shown in Table 6. Similarly, the \$6.6 billion value of volunteering to the 2006 economy can be compared with the 2006 GSP figure for Western Australia of \$118.2 billion.

Table 7 shows that Western Australian volunteers donated to other households, both directly or through volunteer organisations and groups, an additional 6.5 per cent of GSP in 1992 and 5.6 per cent of GSP in 2006. These donations of time and services are additional to actual donations of money made directly to other households or through charitable organisations.

Total value of volunteer time was equivalent to an additional 13.1 per cent of the compensation<sup>1</sup> paid to Western Australian employees in 1992 and 12.9 per cent in 2006. Table 7 shows these estimates in comparison with earlier estimates for Queensland, South Australia and Victoria.

Although the latest Western Australian estimates for 2006 are higher in current dollars than in earlier years, they have declined as proportions of either Gross State Product or of Compensation of Employees.

Thus, on these macro-economic measures, volunteering was relatively more important in the Western Australian economy in 1997 than in either 1992 or 2006. Although the value of volunteering in Queensland shows higher ratios both to Gross State Product and compensation of employees than in Western Australia, the Queensland ratios were also higher in 1997 than in either 1992 or 2006.

**Table 7: Volunteering in Western Australia, Queensland, South Australia and Victoria**

State	1992	1997	2006
<b>Value of Volunteering (\$ billion)</b>			
<i>Western Australia (a)</i>	2.7	4.3	6.6
<i>Queensland (b)</i>	5.3	8.1	13.4
<i>South Australia (c)</i>	2.4	3.9	
<i>Victoria (d)</i>	7.1	10.0	
<b>Value of Volunteering per Adult (\$ per year)</b>			
<i>Western Australia (a)</i>	2,244	3,225	4,252
<i>Queensland (b)</i>	2,396	3,234	4,352
<i>South Australia (c)</i>	2,152	3,450	
<i>Victoria (d)</i>	2,113	2,967	
<b>Gross State Product (\$ billion)</b>			
<i>Western Australia (a)</i>	41.5	57.3	118.2
<i>Queensland (b)</i>	64.7	88.9	178.6
<i>South Australia (c)</i>	30.3	37.9	
<i>Victoria (d)</i>	106.2	131.4	
<b>Compensation of Employees (\$ billion)</b>			
<i>Western Australia (a)</i>	18.2	24.5	45.6
<i>Queensland (b)</i>	30.5	44.1	83.2
<i>South Australia (c)</i>	14.8	18.4	
<i>Victoria (d)</i>	50.7	63.2	
<b>Vale of Volunteerings as Per Cent of Gross State Product</b>			
<i>Western Australia (a)</i>	6.5	7.5	5.6
<i>Queensland (b)</i>	8.3	9.2	7.5
<i>South Australia (c)</i>	7.8	10.2	
<i>Victoria (d)</i>	6.7	7.6	
<b>Value of Volunteering Time as Per Cent of Compensation of Employees</b>			
<i>Western Australia (a)</i>	13.1	15.5	12.9
<i>Queensland (b)</i>	15.4	16.3	14.3
<i>South Australia (c)</i>	14.1	18.7	
<i>Victoria (d)</i>	12.4	13.9	

<sup>1</sup> See Glossary for definition of "compensation of employees"

Sources: (a) This report (Ironmonger, 2009). (b) Ironmonger (2008). (c) Ironmonger (2002). (d) Soupourmas and Ironmonger (2002).

# VOLUNTEERING IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA THROUGH ORGANISATIONS

## ***Value of volunteering through organisations worth \$0.7 billion in 1992 and \$2.1 billion in 2006***

Volunteering through organisations was worth \$0.7 billion to Western Australia in 1992 and \$1.0 billion in 1995. This value increased by 62 per cent to \$1.6 billion in the five years from 1995 to 2000 between voluntary work surveys and a further 30 per cent in the next six years. In 2006, this formal volunteering through organisations was worth about \$2.1 billion to the Western Australian economy.

Table 8 shows more detailed estimates of the structure of the total value of volunteering through organisations in Western Australia in 2006.

To be consistent with the estimates throughout this report the estimates in this section have used the definition of volunteering that is consistent with the definition used in the 1995 and 2000 ABS voluntary work surveys. The volunteer rates are thus slightly higher than the rates published in the main tables of the ABS 2006 survey. The estimates have also been adjusted to the latest ABS estimate of the resident population (ERP) for Western Australia at 30 June 2006.

In Western Australia, the rate of formal volunteering through organisations was 37.6 per cent. That is, of all adults aged 18+ in the state, 37.6 per cent of them identified themselves as volunteers for at least one organisation or group over the previous 12 months. That amounted to 587,800 volunteers.

Women in Western Australia contributed an estimated \$1.07 billion dollars of time and other inputs to volunteer organisations in 2006. In comparison, Western Australian men's donation was worth almost an identical amount, \$1.03 billion.

The higher organised volunteering rate of women – 41 per cent compared to 35 per cent for men – was offset by higher volunteering hours per volunteer for men. On average, a volunteer man gave more volunteering time per year than a woman volunteer, 139 hours compared with 123 hours.



The total of 77.2 million hours of organised volunteering in Western Australia in 2006 is an average of 131 hours for each of the 587,800 volunteers. Over the whole adult population of 1,561,300, including those who did not volunteer, this is only 49 hours per person. Table 2 shows average hours for the whole adult population not per volunteer.

The highest organised volunteering rate was for those aged 35-44 years. The rate was 49.2 per cent (55% for women and 44% for men). The lowest rate was for the oldest age group of 65 years or more. It was 29 per cent (30% for women and 28% for men).

Out of the \$2.1 billion given through organised volunteering in Western Australia in 2006, the 35-44 years age group gave \$540 million at an average value of \$1,749 per adult. This is 30 per cent higher than the average value over all ages of \$1,342.

For women in this age group the average value was \$1,857 – 35 per cent higher than women's average of \$1,371. For men aged 35-44 years the average value of organised volunteering in 2006 was \$1,643 fully 25 per cent higher than the average for all men of \$1,314.

**Table 8: Value of volunteering through organisations by age and gender, Western Australia, 2006**

Western Australian Population Group	Population (000)	Annual Volunteer Rate %	Annual Number of Volunteers (000)	Annual Total Volunteer Hours (million)	Annual Value of Volunteering	
					Value Per Adult (a) \$	Total Value (\$ million)
<b>All Adults 18+</b>	<b>1,561.3</b>	<b>37.6</b>	<b>587.8</b>	<b>77.2</b>	<b>1,342</b>	<b>2,096</b>
<b>Gender</b>						
Women	779.4	40.5	316.1	39.4	1,371	1,068
Men	781.9	34.7	271.7	37.8	1,314	1,027
<b>Age Group (years)</b>						
<b>Women</b>						
18-24	100.2	30.7	30.7	3.8	1,037	104
25-34	139.4	37.6	52.5	6.5	1,271	177
35-44	154.1	55.0	84.7	10.5	1,857	286
45-54	145.9	51.9	75.7	9.4	1,754	256
55-64	108.8	30.8	33.5	4.2	1,041	113
65+	131.1	29.7	39.0	4.9	1,005	132
<b>Men</b>						
18-24	107.8	35.2	37.9	5.3	1,330	143
25-34	144.6	31.1	44.9	6.3	1,175	170
35-44	157.2	43.5	68.3	9.5	1,643	258
45-54	146.9	32.4	47.6	6.6	1,226	180
55-64	114.1	37.0	42.2	5.9	1,400	160
65+	111.3	27.5	30.6	4.3	1,040	116
<b>Adults</b>						
18-24	208.0	33.0	68.7	9.1	1,189	247
25-34	284.0	34.3	97.4	12.8	1,223	347
35-44	311.2	49.2	153.0	20.0	1,749	544
45-54	292.8	42.1	123.4	16.1	1,489	436
55-64	222.9	34.0	75.7	10.0	1,224	273
65+	242.4	28.7	69.6	9.1	1,021	248

(a) Average value per person in population group. Estimates are based on average per volunteer of \$3,380 for women and \$3,780 for men; \$3,566 for all adults 18+.

Source: Estimates of the Households Research Unit based on analysis of the ABS voluntary work survey 2006. Adjusted to ABS estimated resident population for Western Australia at 30 June 2006.

Table 9 shows estimates of the organised volunteering rates, volunteers and value of organised volunteering for gender and location in Western Australia from the ABS voluntary work survey.

Regional Western Australians contributed approximately \$475 million to their communities in terms of organised volunteering. Those living in Perth contributed an estimated \$1,621 million through organised volunteering.

Although the volunteer rate was lower in Perth (37 per cent) than across the balance of the State (40 per cent), on average Perth volunteers gave nine per cent more hours per year, 134 compared with 123.

Per adult in each population group, women outside Perth gave \$1,472 worth of volunteering, the highest annual value of organised volunteering, and an average 10 per cent higher than women in Perth and 24 per cent higher than men outside Perth.

**Table 9: Value of volunteering through organisations by location and gender, Western Australia, 2006**

Western Australian Population Group		Population (000)	Annual Volunteer Rate %	Annual Number of Volunteers (000)	Annual Total Volunteer Hours (million)	Annual Value of Volunteering	
						Value Per Adult (a) \$	Total Value (\$ million)
<b>All Adults 18+</b>		<b>1,561.3</b>	<b>37.6</b>	<b>587.8</b>	<b>77.2</b>	<b>1,342</b>	<b>2,096</b>
<b>Gender</b>							
	Women	779.4	40.5	316.1	39.4	1,371	1,068
	Men	781.9	34.7	271.7	37.8	1,314	1,027
<b>Location</b>							
<b>Perth</b>		<b>1,203.3</b>	<b>37.0</b>	<b>445.0</b>	<b>59.7</b>	<b>1,347</b>	<b>1,621</b>
	Women	602.6	40.2	242.1	29.8	1,341	808
	Men	600.8	33.8	202.9	29.9	1,351	812
<b>Location</b>							
<b>Outside Perth</b>		<b>358.0</b>	<b>39.9</b>	<b>142.8</b>	<b>17.5</b>	<b>1,327</b>	<b>475</b>
	Women	176.9	41.8	74.0	9.6	1,472	260
	Men	181.1	38.0	68.8	7.9	1,189	215

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, (2007b) *Voluntary Work Survey, Australia* Cat No 4441.0 and estimates of the Households Research Unit. Adjusted to ABS estimated resident population for Western Australia at 30 June 2006.





## **Cost estimates of replacing volunteers in service delivery environments**

Volunteers provide their time and other inputs through a variety of organisations. Some such as the State Emergency Services and government schools are essentially publicly oriented and funded and others such as religious organisations and sporting clubs are essentially privately oriented and funded.

The voluntary work surveys do not categorise the organisations for which volunteers work as either private or public but do give an indication of the type of organisation. These service providing organisations can be divided approximately into those that are likely to have a large element of public funding and those that are not, as shown in Table 10. It has been noted in footnote (a) that many volunteers undertake more than one volunteering job.

Just under half (49 per cent) of the annual value of volunteering through organisations in Western Australia in 2006 was contributed to those with a public orientation. Education and training organisations benefited to the tune of \$475 million, community and welfare organisations by \$239 million and health by another \$126 million. The cost of replacing volunteering across all the publicly oriented service providers in 2006 is estimated at \$1.03 billion.

The largest type of volunteer organisation providing privately oriented services was sports and physical recreation organisations with \$584 million worth of volunteering in 2006. About \$281 million of volunteering was undertaken for religious groups.

**Table 10: Value of volunteering through organisations by type of organisation, Western Australia, 2006**

Type of Organisation	Annual Volunteer Rate %	Annual Number of Volunteers (000)	Annual Volunteer Hours (million)	Annual Value of Volunteering (\$ million)
<b>Publicly oriented -</b>				
Education/Training	11.3	176.4	17.5	475
Community/Welfare	5.7	89.0	8.8	239
Health	3.0	46.8	4.6	126
Environment/animal welfare	1.5	23.4	2.3	63
Parenting/children/ youth	1.7	26.5	2.6	71
Emergency services	1.4	21.9	2.2	59
Totally publicly oriented	<b>24.6</b>	<b>384.1</b>	<b>38.1</b>	<b>1,033</b>
<b>Privately oriented -</b>				
Sport/physical recreation	13.9	217.0	21.5	584
Religious	6.7	104.6	10.4	281
Other recreation/interest	1.6	25.0	2.5	67
Arts/heritage	1.4	21.9	2.2	59
Other	1.7	26.5	2.6	71
Total privately oriented	<b>25.3</b>	<b>395.0</b>	<b>39.1</b>	<b>1,063</b>
<b>Total</b>	49.9 a	779.1 a		
<b>Total</b>	<b>37.6 b</b>	<b>587.8 b</b>	<b>77.2</b>	<b>2,096</b>

(a) Counting multiple volunteering for more than one type of organisation.

(b) Counting each volunteer once only.

Source: Estimates of the Households Research Unit based on analysis of the ABS voluntary work survey 2006. Adjusted to ABS estimated resident population for Western Australia at 30 June 2006.

## CENSUS DATA ON VOLUNTEERING IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA IN 2006

In 2006, for the first time, the Australian Census of Population and Housing included questions on voluntary work. They were applicable to people aged 15 years and over, and were separate from the paid labour force questions.

These Census questions covered the participation in both unorganised and organised volunteering. Participation in unorganised volunteering which included adult support and child support was obtained through questions relating to “caring for a person who has a disability, long-term illness or problems related to old age” (Question 49) and “caring for a child/children (including own child or other child)” (Question 50). The question on “voluntary work through/or for an organisation or group” (Question 51) investigated the level of participation in organised volunteering.

In contrast to the 2006 Australian Census of Population and Housing, the voluntary work surveys in 1995, 2000 and 2006 (which have been the source of much of the preceding material in this report) were interview surveys designed to present an account only of volunteers and their volunteering activities through organisations.

Differences in organised volunteering rates between the voluntary work survey and the Census may be due to the fact that the 2006 Census data were collected via a single question on a self completion Census form rather than by a series of questions asked by trained interviewers. Self reporting is considered to be less reliable than an interviewer asking questions about voluntary work, often with examples, as many respondents may not consider or classify their unpaid work as volunteering. Thus, self-reporting tends to give much lower volunteering rates than interview surveys.

Despite this limitation, Census data should be highly valuable in examining *relative* volunteering rates at the small area level, such as statistical divisions and local government areas within states. The small sample sizes of most surveys, such as the voluntary work survey, do not provide estimates for such regional and local areas.

The 2006 Census has also provided data on unorganised (informal) volunteering for these small area levels not available from any other source. The 2006 Census data will become more useful for comparative purposes when the next Census takes place in 2011, if the same questions are asked again.

### The Census questions on unorganised (informal) volunteering

Participation in unorganised voluntary work such as adult support and child support was examined through Questions 49 and 50 in the 2006 Census.

Question 49 asked “*In the last two weeks did the person spend time providing unpaid care, help or assistance to family members or others because of a disability, long term illness or problems related to old age?*”

Question 50 asked “*In the last two weeks did the person spend time looking after a child (aged less than 15 years old) without pay?*”

In contrast to the Census Question 51 which was related to voluntary work through an organisation (and asked respondents about their organised volunteering over the last **twelve month** period), the Census Questions 49 and 50, relating to unorganised volunteering, elicited information about adult and child support over the last **two weeks**.

As a result the numbers of unorganised volunteers and participation rates are lower than that which would be obtained from questions which asked about volunteering for a longer period such as a month or a year.

For the 2006 Census question 49 on unorganised adult support volunteering the wording was:

*In the last two weeks did the person spend time providing unpaid care, help or assistance to family members or others because of a disability, long term illness or problems related to old age?*

- *Recipients of Carer Allowance or Carer Recipient should state that they provided unpaid care*
- *Ad hoc help or assistance such as shopping, should only be included if the person needed this support or assistance because of his/her condition*
- *Do not include work done through a voluntary organisation or group*

*Response :*      *No, did not provide unpaid care, help or assistance*

*Yes, did provide unpaid care, help or assistance*

For the 2006 Census question 50 on unorganised child support volunteering the wording was:

*In the last two weeks did the person spend time looking after a child without pay?*

- *Only include children less than 15 years of age*
- *Mark all applicable responses*

*Response:*      *No*  
*Yes, looked after my own child*  
*Yes, looked after a child other than my own*

The response rates for both these Census questions were around the 90 per cent mark. For question 49 (adult support volunteering) the non-response rate was 9.7 per cent and for question 50 (child support volunteering) the non-response rate was 10.5 per cent.

Table 11 shows the Western Australian data on unorganised volunteering from the 2006 Census. The child support data are for the population who reported they were looking after “a child other than my own” and “looking after my own child and a child other than my own”. They exclude those who only “looked after my own child”.

For child support the volunteer rate over the last two weeks was 9.0 per cent and for adult support 10.0 per cent. Rates were significantly higher for women than for men. Volunteer rates did not vary greatly across the various statistical divisions of Western Australia, however both adult and child support rates were significantly lower for the 15-34 years age group.



In comparison with child support volunteer rates across other states and territories, the Western Australian rate of 9.0 per cent was just above the Australian average (8.8%), above the rates for Victoria (8.5%) and New South Wales (8.6%) but below the rate for the Northern Territory (12.0%) and South Australia (9.8%).

For adult support volunteer rates from the Census, the Western Australian rate of 10 per cent was below the Australian average (11.2%) and below all other states and territories except the Northern territory (8.9%). South Australia had the highest adult support rate of 12.0 per cent.



**Table 11: Census of Population and Housing, unorganised volunteering in Western Australia, 2006**  
Volunteering over last two weeks

		Child Support			Adult Support		
Population Group	Population (000)	Population who answered question (000)	Volunteer Rate %	Number of Volunteers (000)	Population who answered question (000)	Volunteer Rate %	Number of Volunteers (000)
<b>All Adults 15+</b>	<b>1,562.7</b>	<b>1,410.7</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>127.2</b>	<b>1,398.5</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>139.8</b>
Gender							
Women	790.1	720.2	12.0	86.7	713.0	12.3	87.5
Men	772.5	690.5	5.9	40.5	685.5	7.6	52.3
Age Group (years)							
15-34	537.4	483.4	6.9	33.4	480.3	5.6	27.1
35-64	789.7	729.7	10.0	73.0	724.1	12.7	92.2
65+	235.6	197.6	10.5	20.7	194.1	10.5	20.4
<b>Statistical Division</b>							
<b>Perth</b>	<b>1,162.9</b>	<b>1,056.3</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>95.5</b>	<b>1,047.3</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>105.6</b>
<b>Outside Perth</b>	<b>399.8</b>	<b>354.4</b>	<b>8.9</b>	<b>31.7</b>	<b>351.2</b>	<b>9.7</b>	<b>34.2</b>
South West	163.9	148.1	9.1	13.4	146.8	10.3	15.1
Central	44.2	38.9	8.6	3.3	38.5	9.4	3.6
Lower Great Southern	41.3	37.5	8.9	3.3	37.2	10.9	4.0
Midlands	39.4	35.8	8.8	3.2	35.4	10.6	3.8
South Eastern	39.2	34.2	8.7	3.0	33.9	7.8	2.6
Pilbara	30.5	24.3	8.4	2.0	24.1	6.0	1.5
Kimberley	21.6	18.0	10.8	1.9	17.8	10.2	1.8
Upper Great Southern	13.8	12.7	8.9	1.1	12.6	11.0	1.4
Off Shore Areas & Migratory	0.3	0.3	3.0	0.0	0.3	6.8	0.0
No Usual Address	5.5	4.7	6.8	0.3	4.7	7.6	0.4

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, (2007a) *Census of Population and Housing, 2006*, Census Tables Western Australia (State), Catalogue No. 2068.o.



## The Census question on organised (formal) volunteering

Respondents in the 2006 Census were asked in question 51 whether “in the *last twelve months*” they had spent “any time doing voluntary work through an organisation or group?” Excluded was any voluntary work undertaken as part of paid employment or undertaken to qualify for a Government benefit or unpaid work done in a family business.

The wording was:

*In the last twelve months did the person spend any time doing voluntary work through an organisation or group?*

- *Exclude anything you do as part of your paid employment or to qualify for a Government benefit.*
- *Exclude working in family business*

*Response:       No, did not do voluntary work*  
*Yes, did voluntary work*

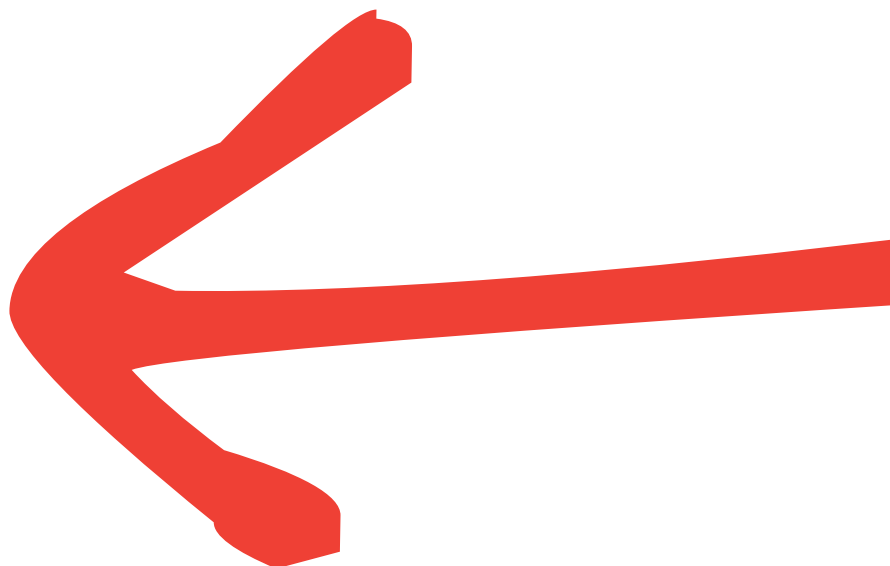
For question 51 the non-response rate was 10.0 per cent.

Table 12 shows detailed data from the 2006 Census on organised volunteering in Western Australia.

The annual rate for organised volunteering was higher for women (21.1%) than for men (16.1%) and was higher for the regional areas outside Perth especially for statistical subdivisions in the southern part of the State. Here, the Upper Great Southern subdivision had the highest rate of 41 per cent.

In comparison with organised volunteering rates across other states and territories reported by the 2006 Census, the Western Australian rate of 18.7 per cent was below the Australian average of 19.8 per cent and the lowest of all areas. It was well below the rates for the Australian Capital Territory (23.9%), South Australia (22.1%) and Tasmania (22.0%).

The accompanying Census maps show the distribution of organised volunteering rates across the statistical divisions of Western Australia (Figure 1) and across the statistical local areas of Perth (Figure 2). These figures provide a more detailed breakdown of organised volunteer rates than that shown in Table 12.



**Table 12: Census of Population and Housing, organised volunteering in Western Australia, 2006**

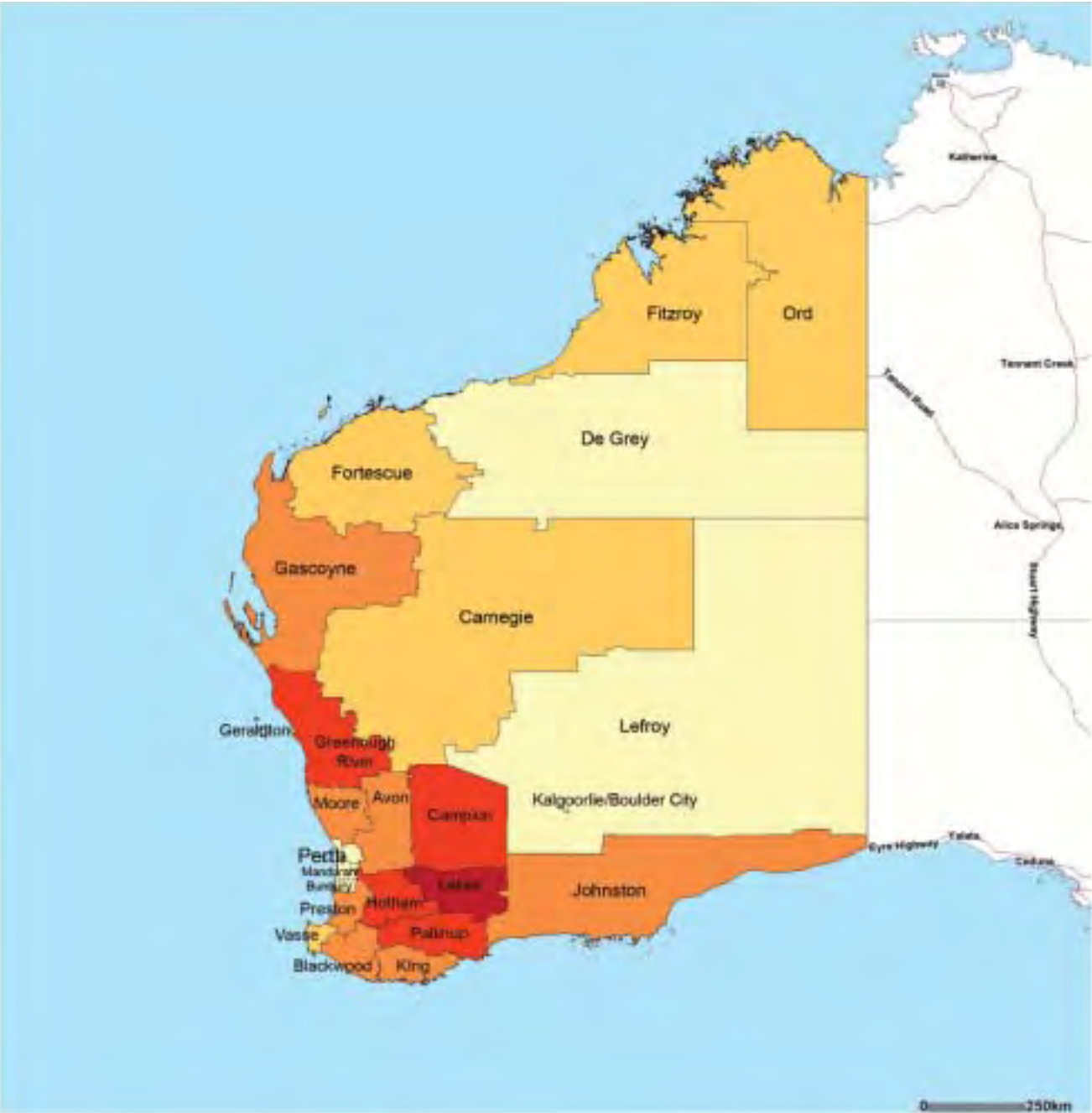
Volunteering over last twelve months

Population Group		Population (000)	Population who answered Volunteering Question (000)	Annual Volunteer Rate %	Annual Number of Volunteers (000)
<b>All Adults 15+</b>		<b>1,562.7</b>	<b>1,406.9</b>	<b>18.7</b>	<b>262.7</b>
Gender					
	Women	790.1	718.1	21.1	151.5
	Men	772.5	688.8	16.1	111.2
<b>Statistical Division</b>					
<b>Perth</b>		<b>1,162.9</b>	<b>1,053.1</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>176.0</b>
	Women	593.9	542.5	19	103.3
	Men	569.0	510.6	14	72.6
<b>Outside Perth</b>		<b>399.8</b>	<b>353.8</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>86.7</b>
	Women	196.2	175.5	27	48.2
	Men	203.6	178.2	22	38.5
	South West	163.9	147.9	22	32.0
	Lower Great Southern	41.3	37.5	29	11.0
	Upper Great Southern	13.8	12.7	41	5.2
	Midlands	39.4	35.7	32	11.5
	South Eastern	39.2	34.1	21	7.3
	Central	44.2	38.8	26	10.0
	Pilbara	30.5	24.2	22	5.2
	Kimberley	21.6	17.8	22	3.9
	Off-Shore Areas & Migratory	0.3	0.3	7	0.0
	No Usual Address	5.5	4.7	14	0.7

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, (2007a) *Census of Population and Housing 2006*, Census Tables Western Australia (State), Catalogue No. 2068.0.

**Figure 1 - People who undertook Unpaid Voluntary Work through an Organisation**

As a percentage of people aged 15 years and over  
Based on Place of Usual Residence, 2006  
Western Australia (State) by Statistical Subdivision



<b>Kimberley</b> Fitzroy Ord	<b>South Eastern</b> Lefroy Kalgoorlie/Boulder City Johnston	<b>Lower Great Southern</b> King Pallinup	<b>Per cent</b> <div><div></div>39 - 56</div> <div><div></div>33 - 39</div> <div><div></div>26 - 33</div> <div><div></div>20 - 26</div> <div><div></div>15 - 20</div>
<b>Pilbara</b> Fortescue De Grey	<b>Midlands</b> Moore Avon Campion	<b>South West</b> Blackwood Bunbury Mandurah Preston Vasse	
<b>Central</b> Gascoyne Carnegie Greenough River Geraldton	<b>Upper Great Southern</b> Hotham Lakes		

Figure 1 identifies the statistical subdivisions with highest rates of volunteering within organisations. These data show that the organised volunteering rates were highest in rural communities in the southern half of the state.

### **The Upper Great Southern**

The Lakes (39-50%): Shires of Corrigin, Kondinin, Kulin and Lake Grace

Hotham (33-39%): Shires of Brookton, Cuballing, Dumbleyung, Narrogin, Pingelly, Wagin, Wandering, West Arthur, Wickepin, Williams and Town of Narrogin

### **The Lower Great Southern**

Pallingup (33-39%): Shires of Broomehill, Gnowangerup, Jerramungup, Katanning, Kent, Kojonup, Tambellup, Woodanilling

### **Midlands**

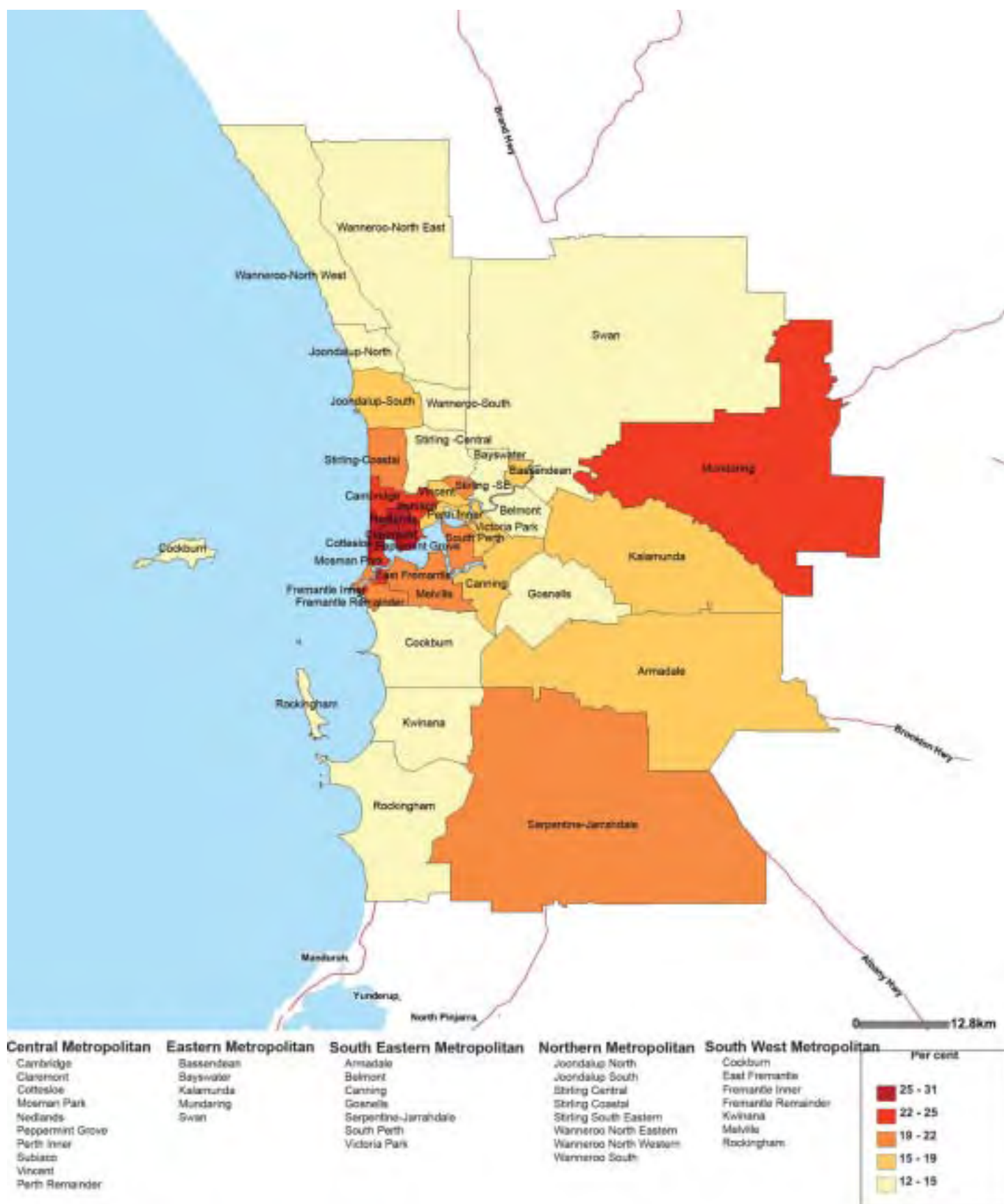
Campion (33-39%): Shires of Bruce Rock, Kellerberrin, Merredin, Mount Marshall, Mukinbudin, Narembeen, Nungarin, Trayning, Westonia, Yilgarn

### **Central**

Greenough River (33-39%): City of Geraldton, Shire of Greenough

**Figure 2 - People who undertook Unpaid Voluntary Work through an Organisation**

As a percentage of people aged 15 years and over  
Based on Place of Usual Residence, 2006  
Perth (Statistical Division) by Statistical Local Area





**Table 13: Census of Population and Housing, organised volunteering in Perth, 2006**

Statistical Subdivision Statistical Local Area	Population (000)	Population who answered Volunteering Question (000)	Annual Volunteer Rate %	Annual Number of Volunteers (000)
<b>All Adults 15+</b>	<b>1,162.9</b>	<b>1,053.1</b>	<b>16.7</b>	<b>176.0</b>
<b>Central Metropolitan</b>	<b>105.6</b>	<b>92.5</b>	<b>23.3</b>	<b>21.7</b>
Cambridge	18.9	17.3	23.8	4.1
Claremont	7.6	6.9	28.1	1.9
Cottesloe	6.0	5.1	27.1	1.4
Mosman Park	6.8	6.0	24.1	1.5
Nedlands	16.3	14.6	28.5	4.2
Peppermint Grove	1.2	1.1	30.6	0.3
Perth Inner	1.0	0.7	14.5	0.1
Perth Remainder	10.0	7.6	17.0	1.3
Subiaco	14.3	12.8	24.4	3.1
Vincent	23.3	20.4	18.0	3.7
<b>Eastern Metropolitan</b>	<b>196.2</b>	<b>178.0</b>	<b>16.2</b>	<b>28.9</b>
Bassendean	11.1	10.0	16.3	1.6
Bayswater	47.0	42.6	14.9	6.3
Kalamunda	39.6	36.5	18.0	6.6
Mundaring	27.7	24.8	22.2	5.5
Swan	70.9	64.1	13.8	8.8
<b>South Eastern Metropolitan</b>	<b>266.7</b>	<b>240.9</b>	<b>15.9</b>	<b>38.2</b>
Armadale	39.5	35.9	16.4	5.9
Belmont	25.3	22.3	13.2	2.9
Canning	63.4	58.2	17.0	9.9
Gosnells	71.4	64.6	12.7	8.2
Serpentine-Jarrahdale	9.9	9.1	19.6	1.8
South Perth	32.9	29.5	20.4	6.0
Victoria Park	24.3	21.3	16.4	3.5
<b>Northern Metropolitan</b>	<b>349.9</b>	<b>320.1</b>	<b>15.7</b>	<b>50.4</b>
Joondalup North	38.4	35.8	14.3	5.1
Joondalup South	80.8	75.6	17.2	13.0
Stirling Central	82.4	73.7	14.4	10.6
Stirling Coastal	52.0	47.4	20.0	9.5
Stirling South Eastern	13.0	11.7	21.3	2.5
Wanneroo North Eastern	24.4	22.5	12.3	2.8
Wanneroo North Western	27.3	24.9	14.0	3.5
Wanneroo South	31.5	28.5	12.0	3.4
<b>South West Metropolitan</b>	<b>244.5</b>	<b>221.2</b>	<b>16.7</b>	<b>36.8</b>
Cockburn	58.5	53.4	13.4	7.1
East Fremantle	5.4	4.9	23.0	1.1
Fremantle Inner	0.8	0.6	23.0	0.1
Fremantle Remainder	20.5	18.3	19.2	3.5
Kwinana	17.8	15.2	13.5	2.0
Melville	76.7	70.9	20.5	14.6
Rockingham	64.8	58.0	14.4	8.3

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, (2007a) *Census of Population and Housing, 2006*, Census Tables Western Australia (State), Catalogue No. 2068.0

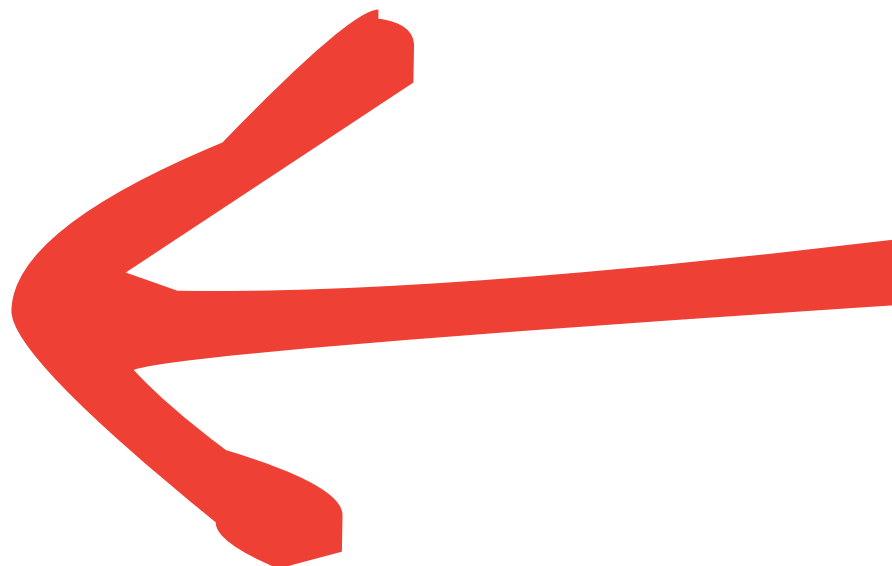
Table 13 shows that among the Perth statistical subdivisions, Central Metropolitan has by far the highest organised annual volunteer rate – 23.3 per cent – whereas each of the other four metropolitan subdivisions have average rates of only 16 to 17 per cent.

Within the Central Metropolitan subdivision the Statistical Local Areas (SLAs) with the highest organised volunteer rates are:

Peppermint Grove	30.6%
Nedlands	28.5%
Claremont	28.1%
Cottesloe	27.1%
Subiaco	24.4%
Mosman Park	24.1%
Cambridge	23.8%

However, within the four outer statistical subdivisions there are seven SLAs which have volunteer rates of 20 per cent or more. These are:

East Fremantle	23.0%
Fremantle Inner	23.0%
Mundaring	22.2%
Stirling South Eastern	21.3%
Melville	20.5%
South Perth	20.4%
Stirling Coastal	20.0%



# THE FUTURE OF VOLUNTEERING IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

## Are we all volunteers?

Almost four in ten (38%) of Western Australian adults volunteered through an organisation in 2006. This is a rise from around one quarter (26%) in 1995.

Unfortunately the rate of participation in unorganised volunteering over the course of a year is unknown. Time use surveys provide information only about the daily volunteering rate, not the annual rate. Unorganised volunteering, directly to friends and neighbours, involves more hours per year than organised volunteering and involves both those who do unorganised volunteering and those who do not. Thus the annual “total” volunteering rate is greater than either the organised rate or the unorganised rate but less than the sum of the two rates.

Recent overseas surveys show unorganised volunteering rates over the last 12 months of more than 70 per cent in the United Kingdom and more than 80 per cent in Canada. If 60 per cent of Western Australian adults undertook unorganised volunteering in 2006, but no organised volunteering, then the total Western Australian volunteering rate would be almost 100 per cent.

Thus it could be the case that nearly all adults in Western Australia undertook some form of organised or unorganised volunteering in 2006. As volunteering survey methodologies improve to recognise both organised and unorganised volunteering a more accurate and reliable portrait of volunteering will be drawn. If it could be comprehensively measured, perhaps the outcome would be that nearly everyone is a volunteer. The total volunteering rate could be 100 per cent!

## The future of Western Australian volunteering

The future is always uncertain and hence difficult to forecast. For some things such as population it is possible to make “projections”, which are not forecasts, based on assumptions about the main factors involved. For example many national

and international organisations make projections of the population of countries – and indeed the world – based on sets of assumptions about the main factors that determine population growth or decline: fertility, mortality and immigration.

For example the latest projections of the population of Australia and its states and territories by the ABS states:

“The projections are not predictions or forecasts, but are simply illustrations of the growth and change in population which would occur if certain assumptions about future levels of fertility, mortality, internal migration and overseas migration were to prevail over the projection period. The assumptions incorporate recent trends which indicate increasing levels of fertility and net overseas migration for Australia.” (ABS, 2008b)

These ABS projections are made in three main series, A, B and C which the ABS states:

“have been selected from a possible 72 individual combinations of the various assumptions. Series B largely reflects current trends in fertility, life expectancy at birth, net overseas migration and net interstate migration, whereas Series A and Series C are based on high and low assumptions for each of these variables respectively.” (ABS, 2008b)

For population projections, many years of research and continuous data collection have shown how the fertility, mortality and migration factors can be combined to make population projections. But the economic and social factors which cause changes in these components are less well known and are not brought into the ABS projections. All that is done is to assume a continuation of current trends (Series B) with some higher (Series A) or lower (Series C) assumptions added.

Although surveys and censuses can measure, fairly imprecisely, changes in volunteering through time, the factors which drive these changes are



relatively un-researched. Thus, although this report has used the available volunteering data to produce some estimates of the value of volunteering in Western Australia over the years 1992 to 2006, it has not revealed much about the factors behind the observed changes.

There are basically three components to the total estimate of the value of volunteering in this report. The first is the average hours of volunteering per adult per year. The second is the number of adults in Western Australia and the third is the average volunteer comparable gross market wage. We can call these components “volunteering hours”, “adult population” and “volunteer wage”.

The Department for Communities has requested the report to include “if possible, the future projected economic value of volunteering (over the next 5, 10, 15 years) based on the impact of key volunteering trends within the Western Australian context.”

To make a projection of the total value of volunteering over the next five, ten or fifteen years, projections would need to be made for each of these three components.

### **Population projections**

The latest ABS Series B projections for the adult population aged 18 years and over of Western Australia show the following data for the years 2006, 2011, 2016 and 2021:

**Table 14: Population projections, ABS Series B Adults aged 18+ years at 30 June ('000)**

	2006	2011	2016	2021	Per cent Change 2006 - 2021	Annual Per cent Change 2006 - 2021
Western Australia	1,561.3	1,756.8	1,950.0	2,134.8	37.0%	2.12%

Source: ABS Time Series Workbook, 3222.0 Population Projections, Australia, Table B.5 Population projections, by age and sex, Western Australia – Series B

### **Volunteer wage rate projections**

The ABS does not provide projections of wage rates for future years. However, a starting point is the estimate of \$24.09 per hour used in this report for the average opportunity cost volunteer wage rate in 2006. The report found that over the period 1992 to 2006 this rate grew at an annual rate of 3.8 per cent a year.

In the absence of any other guidelines, it could be plausibly assumed that this rate could continue to grow over the next 15 years at the same annual rate. Using this projection assumption, the volunteer wage rates per hour would be as shown in the following table.

**Table 15: Wage rate projections (\$/hour)**

	2006	2011	2016	2021	Per cent Change 2006 - 2021	Annual Per cent Change 2006 - 2021
Gross opportunity cost wage rate	24.09	28.99	34.89	42.00	74%	3.8%

Source: Projections of the Households Research Unit based on assumed continuation of the same annual rate of change over the projection years as measured for the years 1992 to 2006.



### ***Projections of volunteering hours***

This is the vital component of the three. The data on volunteering hours per adult observed over the years 1992 to 2006 have shown a number of changes.

There are data for 1992, 1995, 1997, 2000 and 2006 for volunteering through organisations in Western Australia. They show the organised volunteer rate rose from 26 per cent in 1995 to 32 per cent in 2000 and 38 per cent in 2006. There was also a continued rise in the organised volunteer hours per adult per year from 37 in 1992 to 53 in 2000 but a decline to a lower average of 49 hours in 2006.

For unorganised volunteering there are data only for the years 1992, 1997 and 2006. The annual hours per adult rose from 75 in 1992 to 87 in 1997 and then fell to 84 in 2006. For the total hours of volunteering, organised, unorganised and travel, the annual hours per adult grew from 139 in 1992 to 164 in 1997 and then declined to 157 in 2006.

For projections over the next five to 15 years what assumptions should be made about these changes? Will high rates be retained? Can higher average volunteer hours be achieved in the future? Or will average hours continue to decline? Will women continue to volunteer informally at a higher rate than men? As Western Australia continues to become richer, will the relative value of volunteering decline? Can levels and trends in volunteering in other countries provide a guide to trends in Australia?

Trends in volunteering rates and volunteering time vary from country to country and are difficult to measure because of changes in survey methodologies, generally infrequent measurement and sometimes small sample size.

In the United States where surveys were conducted using the same methodology over the six years from 2002 to 2007 participation rates in organised volunteering were relatively constant at around 28 per cent: 27 per cent in 2002, 29 per cent in 2003, 2004 and 2005, 27 per cent in 2006 and 26 per cent in 2007 (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2008).

In Canada participation rates in organised (formal) volunteering grew from 27 per cent in 1987 to 31 per cent in 1997 but then were back to 27 per cent in 2000. However, a new survey in Canada in 2004 using improved methodology from the earlier surveys shows 45 per cent of Canadians 15 years and older volunteered through an organisation in the previous 12 months (Hall, Lasby, Gumulka and Tryon 2006). This survey also found that 83 per cent of Canadians had engaged in unorganised (informal) volunteering by helping others directly, without involving an organisation, at least once over the previous year.

In the United Kingdom volunteering surveys showed organised (formal) volunteering rates were 44 per cent in 1981, 51 per cent in 1991 and 48 per cent in 1997. The same surveys showed unorganised (informal) volunteering rates of 62 per cent in 1981, 76 per cent in 1991 and 74 per cent in 1997 (Institute for Volunteering Research 2008). The UK surveys related to those aged 18 years and older. However the sample sizes were much smaller than in most other surveys – 1,800 in 1981 and just under 1,500 in 1991 and 1997. Consequently, although the UK participation rates are indicative of higher volunteering rates than in Australia and the United States they do not give a reliable indication of trends up or down over time.

In summary, the international evidence indicates that the recent higher levels of organised volunteering in Australia and in Western Australia are within the range of volunteering in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom.

In Australia, the ageing of the population is likely to have effects on volunteering, largely on the demand for support for adults rather than for children. This is likely to be met principally by the supply of unorganised volunteering directly from one household to another.

The change in the total average hours of volunteering per adult observed in Western Australia over the years 1992 to 2006 was an increase of 0.9 per cent a year. A number of possible projections can be made using this rate of change. For this report three projections have been made. Series A assumes that this rate of change continues over the projection period to 2021. Series B assumes that the 2006 average hours are unchanged and Series C assumes that the average hours decline by 0.9 per cent a year.

On these assumptions for the three series of projections of the annual hours of volunteering per adult in Western Australia would be those shown in the next table.

**Table 16: Annual hours of volunteer work projections, Western Australia - Annual hours per adult (Averaged over all adult population aged 18+)**

	2006	2011	2016	2021	Per cent Change 2006 - 2021	Annual Per cent Change 2006 - 2021
Series A	157.0	164.2	171.7	179.6	+14%	+0.9%
Series B	157.0	157.0	157.0	157.0	+ 0%	+0.0%
Series C	157.0	150.1	143.4	137.1	-13%	-0.9%

Source: Projections of the Households Research Unit based on assumptions discussed in this report.

Combining these projections with the ABS Series B population projections for Western Australia gives three series of total volunteer hours for the projection period.

**Table 17: Total annual hours of volunteer work projections Western Australia - Millions of hours per year**

	2006	2011	2016	2021	Per cent Change 2006 - 2021	Annual Per cent Change 2006 - 2021
Series A	244.7	288.0	334.3	382.7	+56%	+3.0%
Series B	244.7	275.3	305.6	334.6	+37%	+2.1%
Series C	244.7	263.2	279.2	292.2	+19%	+1.2%

Source: Projections of the Households Research Unit based on assumptions discussed in this report.

Then combining these projections with the average volunteer wage and including the extra 12.7 per cent for other volunteer inputs, the three series of the total value of volunteering in Western Australia are as shown in the following table.

**Table 18: Total value of volunteering projections Western Australia – \$ billion per year**

	2006	2011	2016	2021	Per cent Change 2006 - 2021	Annual Per cent Change 2006 - 2021
Series A	6.6	9.4	13.1	18.1	+173%	+6.9%
Series B	6.6	9.0	12.0	15.8	+138%	+6.0%
Series C	6.6	8.6	11.0	13.8	+108%	+5.0%

Source: Projections of the Households Research Unit based on assumptions discussed in this report.

On the supply side, volunteering by both women and men is very widespread across all ages, employment status and income levels. Given these factors, it seems probable that volunteering in Western Australia, both formally through organisations and informally from one household to another will be maintained at something like current levels.

However, the attitudes of Western Australians, the social relationships between households and the ways in which the thousands of volunteer organisations in Western Australia grow, develop and operate, will determine what happens to volunteering in Western Australia. The future of Western Australian volunteering lies in the hands of its population and institutions.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Faye Soupourmas, Research Fellow in the Households Research Unit of the University of Melbourne has also provided invaluable assistance.

## METHODOLOGY

This report draws on and extends the methodology used to estimate the value of volunteering in Victoria in the report for the Victorian government *Giving Time: the economic and social value of volunteering in Victoria* (Soupourmas and Ironmonger, 2002).

# GLOSSARY

## **Adult support (Unorganised volunteering)**

The informal help and care given directly to the support of other adults including the elderly, sick or disabled.

## **Child support (Unorganised volunteering)**

The informal help and care given directly to the support of other people's children.

## **Compensation of employees**

The total remuneration, in cash or in kind, payable by an enterprise to an employee in return for work done by the employee during the accounting period. It is further classified into two sub-components: wages and salaries; and employers' social contributions. Compensation of employees is not payable in respect of unpaid work undertaken voluntarily, including work done by members of a household within an unincorporated enterprise owned by the same household. Compensation of employees excludes any taxes payable by the employer on the wage and salary bill (e.g. payroll tax).

## **Economically productive activities**

Activities that result in the production of goods or the delivery of services, including goods and services that are not sold, and goods and services that are self-provided; includes preparation of meals, care of children and adults, volunteer activities and time spent in educational activities.

## **Formal volunteering (Organised and indirect volunteering)**

Unpaid help in the form of time, service or skills willingly given by an individual through an organisation or group. Formal or organised volunteering is *indirect* as it is mediated through an organisation. Reimbursement of expenses or small gifts is not regarded as payment of salary. Work reimbursed by payment in-kind is not regarded as volunteering.

## **Gross State Product**

The value added by all the economic units operating within the borders of a state. For a whole country this is known as Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This value excludes the value added by the household economy (see Household Economy).

## **Household Economy**

The productive activities conducted by households using household capital and the unpaid labour of their own members to process goods and provide services for the use of their own or other households without payment.

## **Households**

A person living alone or two or more persons living together as a single domestic unit who make common provision for food and other essentials for living and occupy the whole or part of one dwelling unit.

## **Households Research Unit**

A research unit of the Department of Economics, University of Melbourne under the direction of Dr Duncan Ironmonger.

## **Informal volunteering (Unorganised and direct volunteering)**

The informal unpaid help and care that occurs within the personal networks of family, friends, neighbours and acquaintances. Informal or unorganised volunteering is *direct* as it is not mediated through an organisation. It includes regular, spontaneous and sporadic help that takes place between friends and neighbours such as giving advice, looking after other people's children or helping an elderly neighbour.

## **National accounts**

The set of statistics of the economic activities of countries prepared and published by national statistical organisations. The system for presenting these statistics is determined from time to time by the United Nations and published as the System of National Accounts (SNA). The most recent revision of this system (1993) recommended that statistics of the productive activities of households (the household economy) should be prepared by national statistical offices as a set of 'satellite' accounts (see **Satellite national accounts of household productive activities**).

### **Organised volunteering (Formal and indirect volunteering)**

Unpaid help in the form of time, service or skills willingly given by an individual through an organisation or group. Formal or organised volunteering is *indirect* as it is mediated through an organisation. Reimbursement of expenses or small gifts is not regarded as payment of salary. Work reimbursed by payment in-kind is not regarded as volunteering.

### **Queensland Household Survey**

This sample survey collects statistics from over 6,500 households throughout Queensland, including the Greater Brisbane area and nine non-metropolitan regions. The survey commenced in November 2000 and is conducted every May and November by the Office of the Queensland Government Statistician, located in the Office of Economic and Statistical Research of the Queensland Treasury. The May 2004 survey collected data on volunteering through organisations at the request of the Department of Communities.

### **Satellite national accounts of household productive activities**

A set of statistical accounts of the productive activities of households that are separate from, but consistent with, the main accounts of economic activity included within the System of National Accounts (see **National accounts**).

### **Time use surveys**

Sample surveys of the uses of time recorded in 24-hour diaries by individuals in households. The Australian Bureau of Statistics conducted diary-based time use surveys in Sydney in 1987 and nation-wide in 1992, 1997 and 2006.

### **Unorganised volunteering (Informal and direct volunteering)**

The informal unpaid help and care that occurs within the personal networks of family, friends, neighbours and acquaintances. Informal or unorganised volunteering is *direct* as it is not mediated through an organisation. It includes regular, spontaneous and sporadic help that takes place between friends and neighbours such as giving advice, looking after other people's children or helping an elderly neighbour.

### **Voluntary work surveys**

Sample surveys of the rates of participation in voluntary work through organisations, the characteristics of people who volunteer, the types of organisations they work for and the activities they undertake. The Australian Bureau of Statistics conducted voluntary work surveys in 1995, 2000 and 2006.

### **Volunteering**

Volunteering consists of unpaid help and care in the form of time, service and skills willingly given by an individual either

- formally and indirectly through an organisation or group (Organised Volunteering) or
- informally and directly within the personal networks of family, friends, neighbours and acquaintances (Unorganised Volunteering).

Travelling in connection with both organised and unorganised volunteering is part of volunteering. (See **Organised volunteering, Unorganised volunteering, and Volunteering travel**)

### **Volunteering travel**

Time spent in travelling in connection with both organised and unorganised volunteering.

### **Volunteer organisations**

A diverse range of social, economic, political, environmental, recreational and cultural organisations and groups, not limited to the not-for-profit welfare and community sectors. Volunteers operate through schools, hospitals, sports clubs, museums, professional associations, business groups, community legal support services and Neighbourhood Watch associations. The ABS voluntary work surveys defined an organisation or group as any body with a formal structure. It may be as large as a national charity or as small as a local book club. Purely ad hoc, informal and temporary gatherings of people did not constitute an organisation for the ABS voluntary work surveys.

### **Volunteer rate**

For any group, the volunteer rate is the number of volunteers in that group expressed as a percentage of the total population in that group.

### **Volunteer time inputs**

The time spent by volunteers in carrying out volunteer activities, including the time taken to travel to, from and during these activities.



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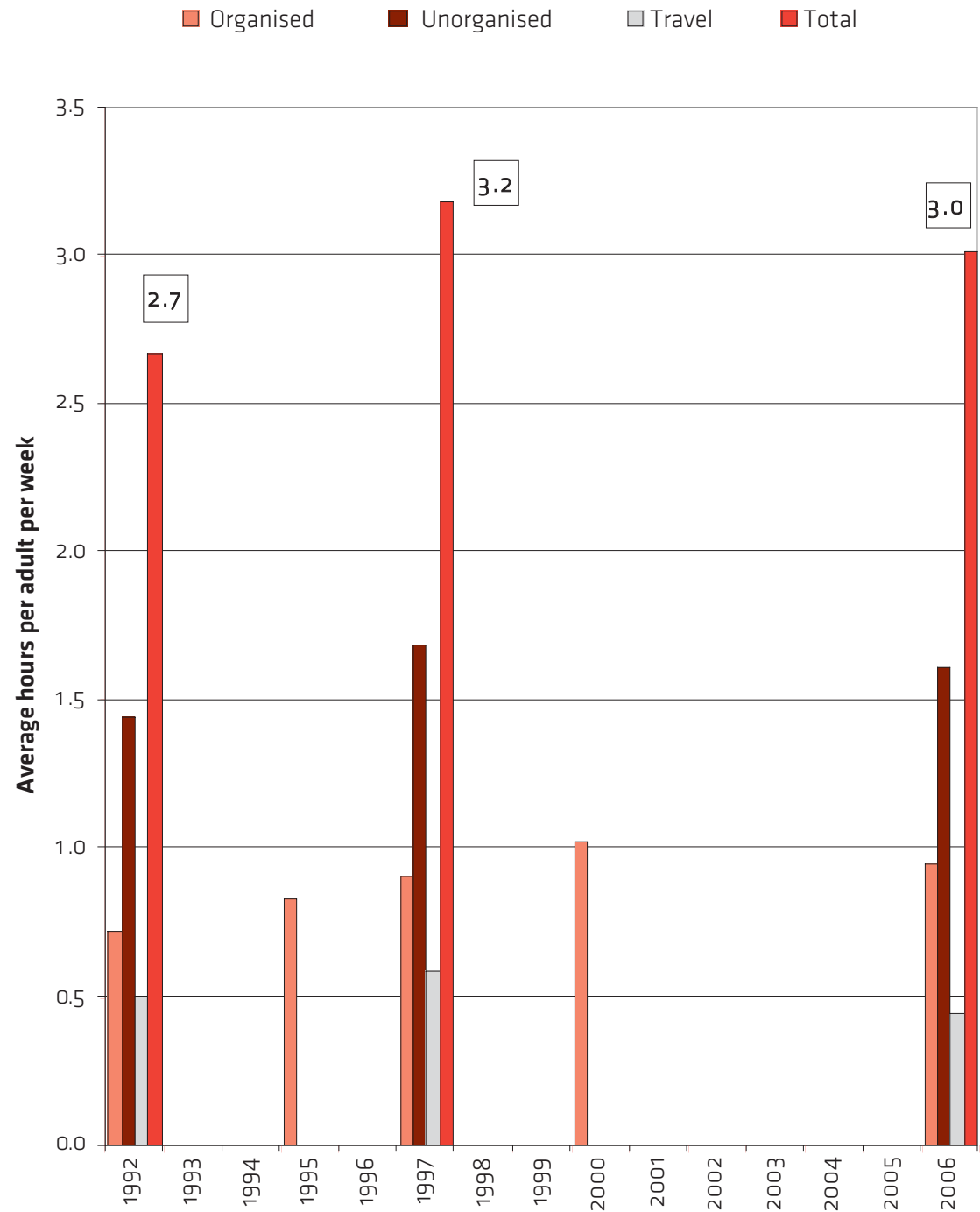
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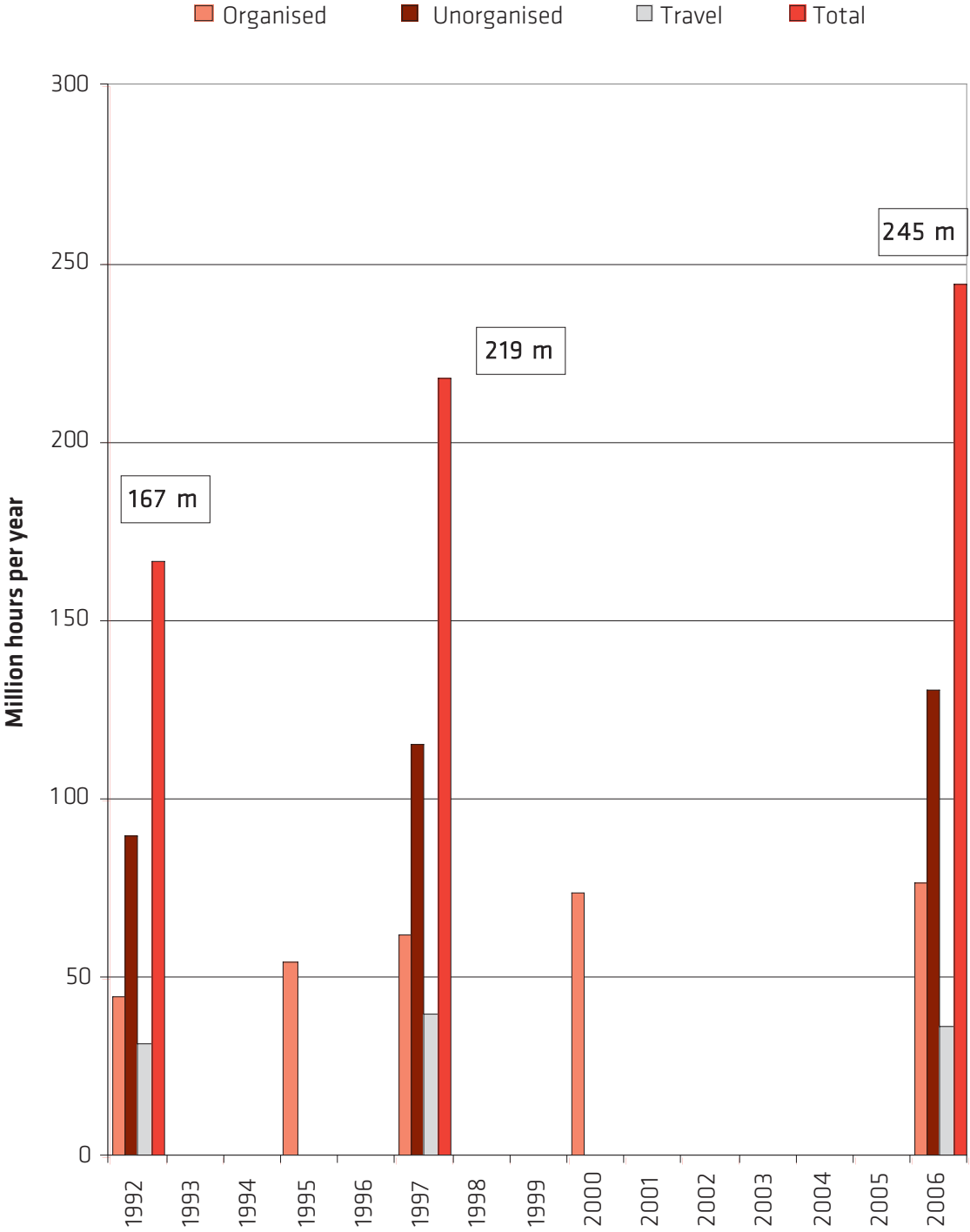
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Chart 1: Average Hours of Volunteer Work, Western Australia, 1992 - 2006 Hours per adult per week



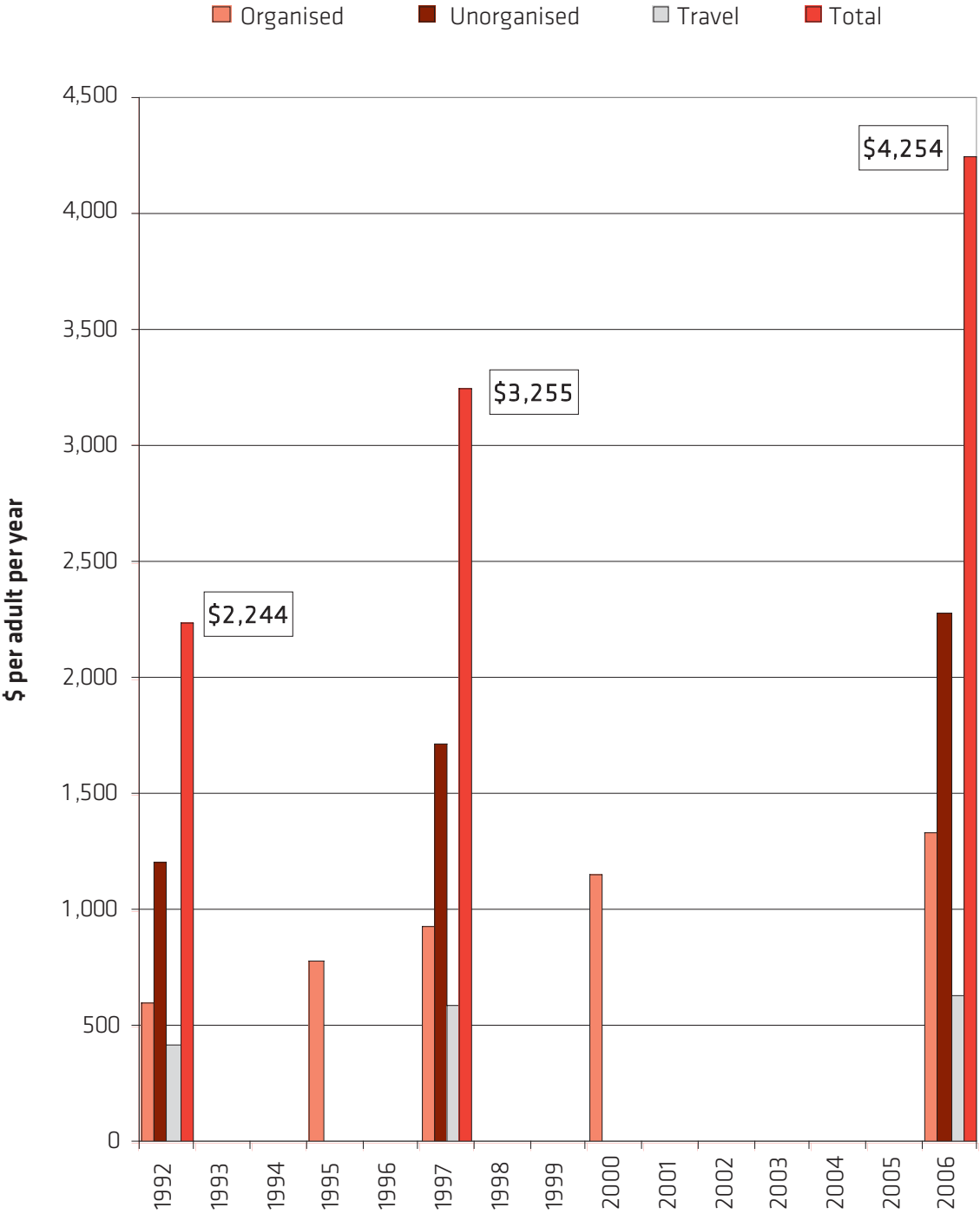
Source: Data from Table 2 of this report converted from average hours per year to average hours per week.

Chart 2: Total Hours of Volunteer Work, Western Australia, 1992 - 2006 Million hours per year



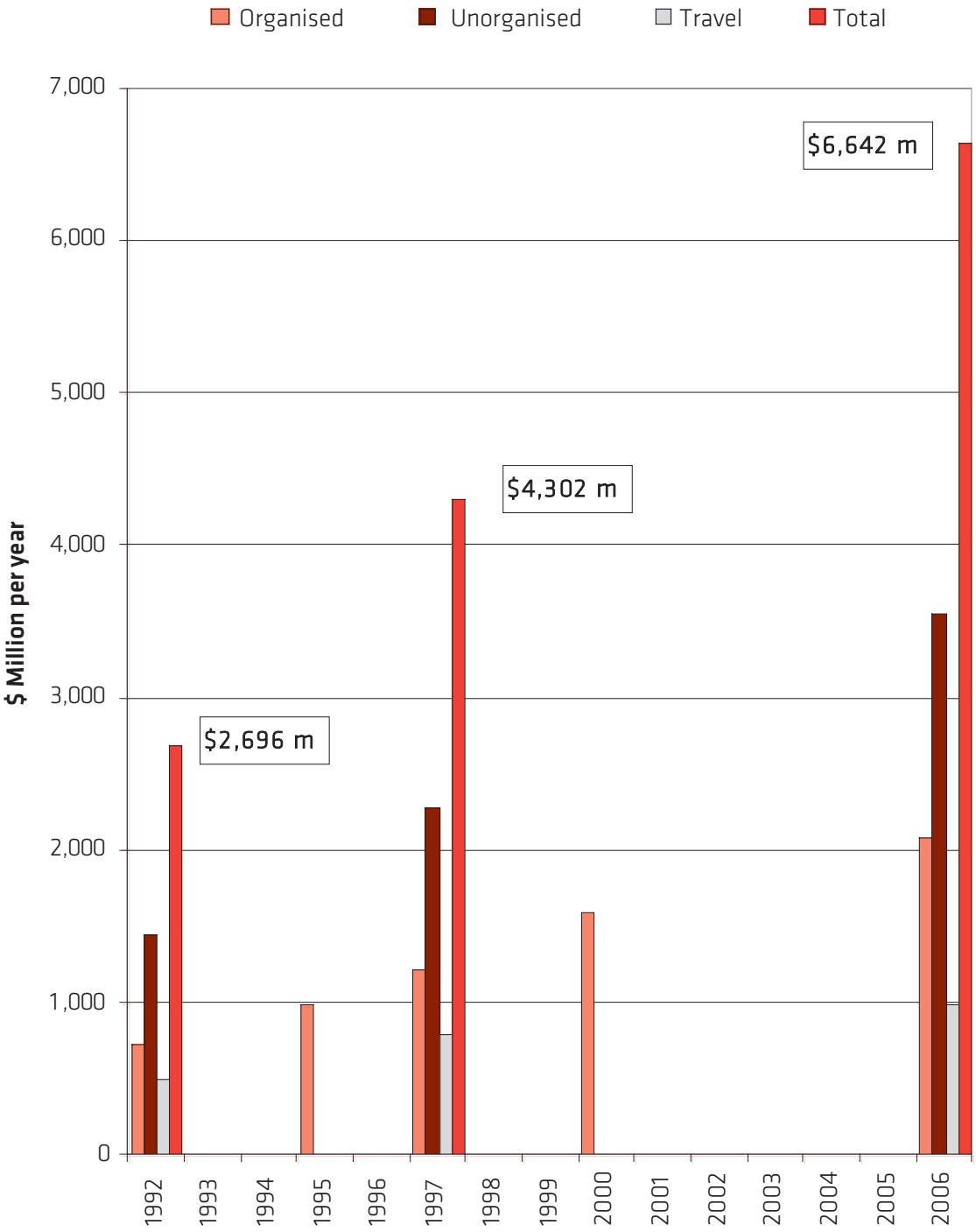
Source: Data from Table 3 of this report.

Chart 3: Average Value of Volunteer Work, Western Australia, 1992 - 2006 \$ per adult per year



Source: Data from Table 5 of this report converted to \$ per adult.

**Chart 4: Total Value of Volunteer Work, Western Australia, 1992 - 2006 \$ million per year**



Source: Data from Table 5 of this report.



# APPENDIX

**Extract from Chapter 3 of *Giving Time: The economic and social value of volunteering in Victoria* (Soupourmas and Ironmonger, 2002)**

## **Chapter 3**

### **What exactly is “Volunteering”?**

#### **Definitions of Volunteering**

Although volunteers contribute to every area of society, there are differing opinions of what exactly constitutes “volunteering”. In practice, definitions of volunteering are rather mutable and elusive. Many volunteers may be unaware that their activities are considered to be volunteering. For instance, a family member who provides care to an elderly person or someone who is a member of a sports club committee may not consider themselves “volunteers”. Volunteering itself can mean different things to different people. In addition, perceptions of volunteering may be changing in contemporary society as a result of Government initiatives such as the Mutual Obligation Scheme<sup>2</sup> and Voluntary Work<sup>3</sup> Initiative. It has been argued that the compulsory nature of some aspects of the Mutual Obligation Scheme has demeaned the notion of volunteer work.

In reality, there are a wide range of interpretations of what constitutes voluntary work. Recently, the United Nations (UN) has adopted specific criteria to distinguish volunteering from other forms of behaviour that may superficially resemble it. According to the UN, volunteering:

- is not to be undertaken primarily for financial gain
- is undertaken of one’s own free will; and
- brings benefit to a third party as well as to the people who volunteer.

According to this three-point criteria, there can be four basic types of volunteering activity – mutual aid and self help; philanthropy or service to others; campaigning and advocacy; and finally participation and self governance. These four broad areas encompass a wide range of volunteering activities.

#### **Formal (Organised) Volunteering**

Critical to many definitions of volunteering, including the UN definition, is the notion of “free choice” or “free will”. The idea of “free choice” implies that individuals act of their own accord and are exempt from external authority, interference or coercion. As a result, volunteering is often described as a freely chosen “gift of time”. For the purposes of their 1995 and 2000 voluntary work surveys, the Australian Bureau of Statistics defined a “volunteer” as:

Someone who willingly gave unpaid help, in the form of time, service or skills, through an organisation or group.

Fundamental to the ABS interpretation of a volunteer is the notion of “free will”. This definition also reinforces the notion that volunteering is undertaken without financial gain. Although a volunteer may not seek financial gain, there are situations where the acceptance of money is allowed under this definition. The ABS sought to explain what was understood by the term “unpaid help” by pointing out that the reimbursement of expenses or small gifts was not regarded as payment of salary. However, people who received payment in-kind for the work they did were not defined as volunteers.

The ABS also restricted voluntary work to activities managed through organisations. Formal or organised volunteering is indirect as it is mediated through an organisation. More direct forms of volunteering that are not managed through an organisation were not included in the ABS surveys. The ABS limited the scope of volunteering to unpaid activities that were formally managed by an organisation.

<sup>2</sup> People in receipt of the Youth Allowance or Newstart may also choose volunteer work as a means of participating in the Mutual Obligation Scheme. The Mutual Obligation Scheme applies to Centrelink customers, in receipt of Newstart, between the ages of 18-34.

<sup>3</sup> The Voluntary Work Initiative (VWI) is a program whereby a person on the Newstart benefit undertakes 32 hours a fortnight of volunteer work in a 'not-for-profit' organisation as part of Newstart's activity requirements. This type of arrangement is available to people over the age of 50 and people between the ages of 18-49 who have been in receipt of Newstart for twelve months or more and often has an element of compulsion. Referrals to volunteer work are often made by Centrelink.

*Volunteering Australia* has distinguished 'formal' or 'organised' volunteering from 'informal' or 'unorganised' volunteering. Formal volunteering is identified as an activity which occurs in not-for-profit organisations and is:

- of benefit to the community and the volunteer
- undertaken of the volunteer's own free will and without coercion
- for no financial payment; and
- in volunteer designated positions only<sup>4</sup>.

While this approach shares a number of the characteristics of ABS definition, it extends beyond these definitions by distinguishing and specifying that formal/organised volunteering can only take place in a not-for-profit organisation or project and that volunteers can only work in designated volunteer positions. It also focuses on the fact that volunteering is fundamentally intertwined with our basic responsibilities in society and must be for the benefit of the community and the volunteer.

In the same vein the *International Association for Volunteer Effort* adopted a definition of volunteering that takes the idea of active citizenship and community involvement even further. It specifies volunteering:

- is based on personal motivation and choices, freely undertaken
- is a way of furthering active citizenship and community involvement
- takes the form of individual or group activities generally carried out within the framework of an organisation
- enhances human potential and the quality of life, building up human solidarity
- provides answers for the great challenges of our time, striving for a better and more peaceful world; and
- contributes to the vitality of economic life, even creating jobs and new professions.

While this definition reinforces a number of the characteristics identified in the previous definitions, it places more emphasis on the social objectives or outcomes of volunteering.

Many people examining these definitions will find some overlap with their own beliefs about what volunteering is all about. Although there are some who will like a more specific and narrow

definition of volunteering, there will be others who would welcome a broader and more encompassing definition that defines volunteering in terms of our basic obligations to our communities.

### ***Informal (Unorganised) Volunteering***

The broader definitions of volunteering recognise donations of time outside formal organisations. Volunteering is often understood in reference to everyday social obligations, not some "special" activity that occurs through organisations.

For example, *Volunteer Canada* refers to volunteering as:

The most fundamental act of citizenship and philanthropy in our society. It is offering time, energy and skills of one's own free will. It is an extension of being a good neighbour, transforming a collection of houses into a community, as people become involved in the improvement of their surroundings and choose to help others. By caring and contributing for change, volunteers decrease suffering and disparity, while they gain skills, self esteem, and change in their lives. People work to improve the lives of their neighbours and, in return, enhance their own.

The *National Centre for Volunteering* in the United Kingdom identifies volunteering as:

An important expression of citizenship and essential to democracy. It is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community and can take many forms. It is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for financial gain.

Broader definitions highlight that volunteering is undertaken by people in their communities and social networks on both a formal and informal basis. Many voluntary work activities and tasks – such as giving advice, looking after other people's children or an elderly neighbour – are crucial to community life and the building of social capital. However, many narrow definitions of volunteering ignore these activities.

The ABS definition of volunteering excludes the informal help and care that occurs within the personal networks of family, friends, neighbours and acquaintances.

<sup>4</sup> It is noted that Volunteering SA and Volunteering Victoria as member organisations of Volunteering Australia have also endorsed this definition.

Informal or unorganised volunteering is the spontaneous and sporadic helping that takes place between friends and neighbours – for example, child care or running errands for an elderly neighbour. It is the primary form of volunteering in many communities. It is misleading to insist that volunteering can only be undertaken through some kind of organisation because such a definition excludes the vast amount of mutual aid and help that goes on directly between friends and neighbours.

Expanding the ABS's narrow definition of volunteering, we need to recognise that volunteering is also undertaken outside organisations on an informal basis within personal networks.

Therefore, volunteering research is complicated by the fact that there are two main types of volunteering:

- Formal or Organised; and
- Informal or Unorganised.

The profile of volunteers may change depending on what definition of volunteering you use. Furthermore, the profiles of volunteers in the formal and informal sectors may be quite different. State data from the national voluntary work surveys (1995 and 2000) and time use surveys (1992 and 1997) can be used to compose a portrait of formal and informal volunteers in Victoria.



